

# THE NEWS

Wednesday 7 January, 2009

Newspaper of the year

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## 2B OR NOT TO BE?

*A free adaptation of Hamlet*

*An exclusive book extract*

### *A strange case of murder, revenge and madness in faraway lands*

**"2B OR NOT TO BE? That's the question" said police officer 000**

⇒ Tragedy in Denmark

⇒ Police are interrogating suspects



Ophelia by Millais

*I loved you once*



#### **To be, or not to be: that is the question:**

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them?

#### **To die: to sleep;**

No more; and by a sleep to say we end

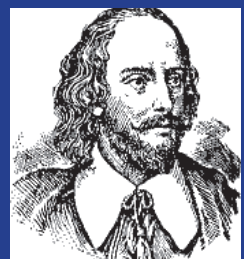
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation

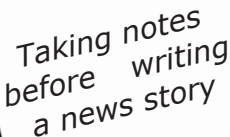
Devoutly to be wish'd.

#### **To die, to sleep;**

To sleep: perchance to dream

**"ALL THE WORLD IS A STAGE" WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**





Police officer is interrogating the only suspect in this gruesome case of murder, revenge and madness. Read and try to complete the chart below

[illegible]

***The most baffling case we've ever had to deal with!!***

**The chief inspector:** "It's the most baffling case we've ever had to deal with. Bodies all over the place."

**000:** That's awful, sir. I agree with you. I've never seen so many dead bodies.

**The chief inspector:** "Awful, it's a disaster! Think of all the paperwork we'll have to deal with. It will take us weeks, months!"

**000:** Years?

**Narrator:** 000 nodded looking at the twisted bodies sprawled over the castle floor. There was at least one king, one queen and a prince not to mention assorted courtiers and a skeleton of unknown origin.

**The chief inspector:** Every time there's a murder case we have to fill in a Form 2B and it takes hours.

**Narrator:** the inspector leaned forward and breathed onion breath in 000's face

**The Chief inspector** (hissing): "Try to arrange it so there are no 2B forms to fill in, I must go now"

**Narrator:** 000 walked over to a man sitting in a corner of a castle hall. He was wrapped in a black cloak.

**000:** Name?

**Horatio:** Horatio is my name

**000:** Well, Mr Horatio, I arrest you in the name of the law.

**Horatio** (blinking and looking up at him): Me? Why me?

**000:** "Because you are the only one left alive"

*But he suddenly remembered a murder arrest meant filling in a 2B form. He was hoping he could come up with a good explanation.*

**Horatio:** I can come up with a good explanation

**000** (giving a sigh of relief), said: "Sit on this chair and explain to me what happened.

*As he sat on it, 000 handcuffed his ankle to the leg of the chair. An old trick they taught me in the Danish police training school*

**Horatio:** "It all began on a freezing , moonless midnight."

**000:** "It often does, sir. Continue please."

**WHAT**

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New Words:

Baffling: (adjective) hard to comprehend or solve



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**Horatio:** "The guards were patrolling the walls of Elsinore Castle here when they reported seeing a ghost."

**000:** "Drunk?"

**Horatio:** "No, the ghost was quite sober!"

**000:** "I meant the guards! Oh, never mind. Get on with it."

**Horatio:** "It sounded like the ghost of the old king, Hamlet. I went and told his son, Hamlet . . ."

*000 began to make notes. Suddenly he stopped.*

**000:** "I thought the king was Hamlet."

**Horatio:** "He was."

**000:** "But you said the prince was Hamlet"

**Horatio:** "He was."

**000:** "They were both called Hamlet?"

**Horatio:** "They were."

**000:** "Just checking, carry on."

**Horatio:** "Prince Hamlet was my friend at university. I told him about the ghost and he came out onto the battlements to see for himself. The ghost of King Hamlet told his son that he had been poisoned . . ."

**000:** "Murdered?"

**Horatio:** "Murdered. King Hamlet had been sleeping in an orchard. His brother, Claudius, dripped poison into his ear and killed him."

**000:** "Ah, but a ghost can't give evidence at a trial, so no forms to fill in for this one. Murder by person or persons unknown."

**Horatio** scowled at **000** and pointed out: "The evil Claudius was the one who gained by King Hamlet's death. He took the throne and he married the queen Gertrude, King Hamlet's widow and Prince Hamlet's mother."

**000:** "He married three women!"

**Horatio.** "No, no. They were all the same woman. No wonder the ghost of the woman couldn't rest!"

**000:** "The ghost wanted to kill Claudius?"

**Horatio:** "No. . . . the ghost wanted his son, Prince Hamlet, to kill Claudius."

**000:** "The royal avenger, very noble." **Horatio:** "But unfortunately, my friend Hamlet wasn't a murderer. He couldn't kill anyone in cold blood. His excuse was that the ghost could have been a devil, not the true ghost of his father."

**000:** "Very wise, one can't go around killing people just 'cos a ghost tells you to!"



Henry Fuseli. *Hamlet and the Ghost*, 1789.

New Words:

Horatio: "So Hamlet set a trap. He hired a group of actors to perform a play in which a king is murdered by his brother by dripping poison in his ear. The play was performed in front of Claudius, and you should have seen him panic! That's when Hamlet knew his uncle was a murderer."

000: "So, he killed him."

Horatio: "Not yet. He had a chance when Claudius was praying in church, but Hamlet let him escape. Instead he went to shout at his mother for marrying Claudius. Unfortunately, old Polonius - he was responsible for running the royal household, you know- as I was saying, Polonius was hiding behind a curtain in the queen's room. Hamlet saw the curtain move, thought it was Claudius and stabbed through the curtain. He killed old Polonius in an instant."

000: "Well, that's two dead, but stabbing a man like that is accidental death, not murder."

Horatio: "Unfortunately, Polonius's daughter, Ophelia, was in love with Hamlet. The killing drove her mad. She drowned herself."



000: "Three gone. Suicide is punishable by death. But since she drowned, we needn't bother with her."

Horatio: "I'm not sure about that. Her brother, Laertes, was furious. Prince Hamlet had killed his father . . ."

000: "Accidentally,"

Horatio: "Accidentally, and brought about the death of his sister . . ."

000: "By suicide."

Horatio: "Laertes was determined to kill Hamlet."

000: "Not another murder."

Horatio: "Not yet. Hamlet wasn't in Denmark at the time. Claudius had hired two men, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to take Hamlet on a trip to England. Claudius sent a secret letter to the king of England asking him to kill Prince Hamlet as soon as he landed."

000: "But he survived?"

Horatio: "Hamlet switched the letter for another one that asked the English to kill Rosencrantz and Guildenstern instead. They did!"

000: "That's five dead so far. But Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are England's problem, not mine."

Horatio: "Hamlet survived and came back to Denmark. King Claudius then planned to have Hamlet killed in a duel."

000: "Fair fight. That's not murder."

Horatio: "It is murder when the king planned to give Laertes a poisoned sword and give Hamlet a poisoned drink, just to make sure!"

000: "Well, you know, it sounds like a family matter to me, not a case for the police. But carry on. What happened?"

**WHAT**

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New Words:

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Horatio: "Hamlet came back from England in time to see Ophelia's grave being dug. The gravediggers found a skull . . ."

000: "No! That's number six!"

Horatio: "It was the skull of the old court jester, Yorick."

000: "Don't tell me he was murdered!"

Horatio: " Oh, no. He died of old age, years ago."

000 (wiping his brow): "Phew. That's good. I'm running out of paper here."

Horatio: "Laertes turned up at Ophelia's funeral and almost killed Hamlet on the spot. They were wrestling in the grave and had to be torn apart!"

000: "Very muddy, grave-wrestling. It shouldn't be allowed."

Horatio: "Anyway, Laertes and Horatio appeared before Claudius and Queen Gertrude for their duel."

000: "With a poisoned sword?"

Horatio: " And poisoned wine."

000: "Somebody could get hurt there".

The young man looked at the pile of bodies behind the inspector.

000: So what happened? He asked and turned his paper over. He was having to write on the back now and his pencil needed sharpening.

Horatio: "Hamlet and Laertes fought and Laertes wounded Hamlet. The poison began to work. But then the swords fell from their hands, they got mixed up and Hamlet was fighting with the poisoned sword. He stabbed Laertes and Laertes began to die!"

000: "Nasty."

Horatio: "Then Queen Gertrude drank the poisoned wine by mistake and she began to die. She warned Hamlet about the poison. Then she died!"

000: "That's number seven, I reckon. She died of drinking wine, did she? We'll put that one down as food poisoning, I think."

Horatio, continued saying: "Hamlet was furious. He realized he was dying, so he stabbed Claudius and forced him to drink the rest of the poisoned wine."

000: "It sounds fair enough to me. He was a nasty piece of work, that Claudius!"

Horatio: "He died."

000: "Number eight! If he drank the wine I knew it was poisoned, I guess we can call that another suicide."

Horatio: "Then Laertes died from the poisoned sword . . ."

000: "Number nine! We'll put that one down as blood poisoning, I think. That's what happens when you fight with a rusty sword! I see there will be no 2B murder forms to fill in for me. Life is beautiful again – We're nearly in double figures here! go on and finish the story"



Eugene Delacroix "Hamlet and Horatio in the Cemetery"

Narrator: Horatio looked very sour. In fact there was a tear in the corner of his eye as he said . .

Horatio: And finally, of course, my friend Hamlet died from the poisoned sword.

Then, he buried his face in his cloak and wept

000: "That's ten. All topped! A sort of topped ten! Any more you want to tell me about? If not you can leave. I've decided not to arrest you. You have a lot of funerals to arrange."

Narrator: The truth is that 000 was more interested in getting back to the boss with the news that there did not seem to be any murder cases to investigate and most important, none of those great, thick, boring 2B murders to fill in. He knew as soon as he walked into the inspector's office what the first thing he'd say to him would be:

***2B or not 2B? that's the question!"***

**CASE SOLVED  
FILE CLOSED**

News report

Denmark.- \_\_\_\_\_

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**WHAT**

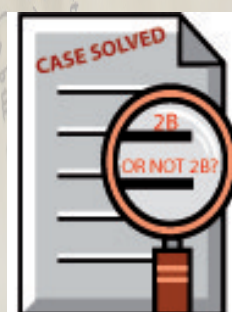
**WHO**

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**WHERE**

**WHY**

**HOW**







*Edwin Austin Abbey, Hamlet The Play Scene*

***All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,***

All the world's a stage (from As You Like It 2/7)